medicines tested for heavy metals and in case they are herbo-metallic drugs, to get their safety/toxicity tested. As per Ayurveda principles, herbo-metallic compounds following the detoxification process outlined in classical texts are safe. However, following steps have been taken:

(i) Government has introduced mandatory testing for heavy metals in all purely herbal Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani medicines to be exported which is effective from 01.01.2006 onwards. This has been done to meet the regulatory requirements of importing countries.

(ii) State Drug Licensing Authorities have been directed to ensure full compliance by all ASU drug manufacturers of the provision of Rule 161 (1) and (2) relating to displaying on the label of the container or in a leaflet to be inserted in the package of an ASU drugs, the true list of all the ingredients used in the manufacture of the preparation together with the quantity of each of the ingredients incorporated therein.

(iii) Under Centrally Sponsored Scheme 29 State Drug Testing Laboratories have been strengthened and 26 Pvt. Drug Testing Laboratories and other NABL accredited laboratories have been approved for testing of ASU drugs in the country.

(iv) A research project has been sanctioned to various laboratories to Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) under the Golden Triangle Partnership Project to study the physiochemical characteristics of 8 most widely use Bhasmas and to carry out their toxicity studies.

(v) Good Manufacturing Practices have been made mandatory for all Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani drug manufacturing units in the country.

Learning disorders

2688. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether around 20 million children in the country are found affected with learning disorders;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what is the action plan of Government to address this issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) and (b) There is no epidemioilogical data on the prevalence of learning disorders in the country.

(c) Remediation and Accommodation are the major management strategies in the fight against dyslexia (learning disorder). The remedial efforts for dyslexia need to focus on phonological awareness training which can improve reading decoding

skills. The Rehabilitation Council of India under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment recognizes courses that train special educators. The NCERT and the C.B.S.E., I.C.S.E. and some State Boards give exemptions in languages and certain subjects to assist these children. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Programme also has, as its aims, attention to these children in regular schools.

Mental health schemes

2689. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to revamp mental health schemes in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the action plan of Government to revamp National Mental Health Programme in the backward States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, etc.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (c) The Government proposes to re-strategise the National Mental Health Programme during Eleventh Plan to expand District Mental Health Programme to cover the areas of suicide prevention stress management, School Mental Health etc. and also to create infrastructure for production of quality manpower/ training of personnel etc., for effective delivery of mental health services.

Equal status to pharmacists

2690. SHRI BASHISTHA NARAIN SINGH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the posts of pharmacists are treated as gazetted posts in certain States;

(b) whether it is also a fact that staff nurses and doctors are given the same status and facilities equally throughout the country;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the scales of pharmacists are not equal and identical even in the Central Government organisation; and

(d) if so, what steps Government propose to take to remove this anamoly and provide equal status to all the pharmacists and other paramedical staff throughout the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare does not maintain data of pharmacists posted in states. However entry grade scale of pharmacists is Rs.4500-7000/- in the Central Government Hospitals, which is a group 'C' Non-Gazetted post.